



# MECKLENBURG COUNTY North Carolina

Public Health

## Office of Policy and Prevention

*Reducing Chronic Disease by Making  
Healthier Choices Easier*

# 2020 Year in Review

# 7

## POLICY CHANGES

POLICY change is achieved through the adoption of an ordinance, policy, resolution, rule, etc., that focuses on healthy behavior.

# 52

## SYSTEM CHANGES

SYSTEM change occurs when an organization's procedures, processes, or protocols are reframed to support healthy lifestyles.

# 20

## ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

ENVIRONMENTAL change occurs when the physical environment is altered or modified to promote health and wellness.

## OUR PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS...



### ACTIVE LIVING & INJURY PREVENTION

We played a pivotal role in ensuring that public health is a consideration in long-range planning efforts, such as the Charlotte Future 2040 Comprehensive Plan, Meck Playbook, Charlotte's Strategic Mobility Plan, and the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization's 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

### TOBACCO PREVENTION & CONTROL

Change for Life: Tobacco Free Recovery initiative launched with support provided to McLeod Addictive Disease Center in transitioning nine sites to tobacco-free in January 2021. The initiative includes policy development, tobacco treatment integration, and communication materials to empower behavioral health agencies in becoming tobacco-free.

### FOOD SECURITY

Four new farmers markets safely opened—Plaza Midwood, South End, University City, and Uptown Charlotte—all including SNAP/EBT and Double Bucks benefits. That is a total of 20 farmers markets in Mecklenburg County. Public Health also collaborated to help farmers markets remain open as safe food access points during the COVID-19 pandemic.

# 2020... A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER

The Office of Policy and Prevention aims to improve the health of our community regardless of race, ability, socioeconomic status, identity, or zip code. With health equity as a guiding principle, our work focuses on policy, systems, and environmental change initiatives designed to prevent death and disability from chronic disease and injury. 2020 brought unprecedented challenges to our community and our team's mission. We served vital roles in Mecklenburg County's COVID-19 response, including contact tracing, case investigation, employer notification, and communications. Team members also provided County-wide leadership in engaging the Latino community on health and safety messages. For more information about our programs, call the Office of Policy & Prevention at (980) 314-9065.

## ACTIVE LIVING & INJURY PREVENTION

Our **new program name**—Active Living & Injury Prevention—highlights our evolution towards including injury prevention strategies as means to reduce chronic disease and improve the health and safety of our community.

Advocated successfully for the Charlotte Regional Transportation Planning Organization to include **health equity** in its Transportation Alternative Program, requiring projects to meet certain criteria for additional funding.

Installed **five painted playgrounds** at schools in response to COVID-19 restrictions that limit use of playground equipment. The designs, painted with Safe Kids Charlotte-Mecklenburg, encourage physical activity while social distancing.

## FOOD SECURITY

Partnerships with the Latin American Chamber of Commerce of Charlotte expanded our reach with the **"Family Food Package Program,"** enabling three Latin-owned corner stores to prepare hot meals for families in need.

Through oversight and support by the food security team, 20 of our healthy corner stores maintained or achieved the **N.C. Healthy Food Retail Designation** despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

Three new **edible landscapes** were installed—totaling seven—in collaboration with TreesCharlotte, N.C. Cooperative Extension, and faith organizations, expanding access to fresh fruits in food insecure communities.

## TOBACCO PREVENTION & CONTROL

Thirty-eight **capacity building trainings** on tobacco prevention and control topics and strategies provided to 2,000 participants, including Village HeartBEAT, workplaces, community organizations, health professionals, youth, and more.

Our staff provided **tobacco-free policy and quit support** to a variety of worksites, including Electrolux and four regional furniture companies, with one resulting in a formal public-private partnerships with QuitlineNC.

Launched a 12-week **"Quit & Stay Quit Mondays"** campaign targeting the community and Mecklenburg County employees with encouragement, quit tips, and access to quit support.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Launched re-imagined and improved **web pages** for all Office of Policy & Prevention programs: [ActiveLiving.MeckNC.gov](https://ActiveLiving.MeckNC.gov), [FoodSecurity.MeckNC.gov](https://FoodSecurity.MeckNC.gov), and [TobaccoFree.MeckNC.gov](https://TobaccoFree.MeckNC.gov).

Conducted a social media campaign during the **2020 Charlotte PRIDE Virtual Festival**, reaching the LGBTQ+ community and allies with inspirational resources for tobacco-free living.